



Dr. Marcus H. Martins

## Marriage & Eternal Marriage – The Analogy of the Concrete Slab Marcus H. Martins, Ph.D.

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In 2015 I wrote a commentary online about the difference between the divine ordinance of marriage and a regular civil marriage. I reproduce here a slightly edited and expanded version of those remarks.

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I would make an analogy between the divine institution of marriage—specifically the sealing ordinance in the temple, the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage (Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4)—and a concrete slab.

Early in my professional life (mid-1970s) I worked in the construction industry, and so I know a little about the quality and proportions of materials (types of cement, gravel, sand, water, and rebar) used in preparing concrete, and the proper care required during mixing and use.

Making an analogy between these materials contained in a concrete slab and the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage, I would imagine the following:

- Cement would represent the priesthood, the power and authority by which a man and a woman are united as a couple for time and eternity.
- Aggregates (gravel and sand) would represent the essential elements of love, kindness, respect, and attention that should permeate the relationship between the couple and eventually among the other family members—children, relatives, etc. Without these, the “slab” (or marriage) would not have durability. No sealing in a temple can make two people who cannot stand each other remain united forever.
- Water would represent certain ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ—(for now) baptism, sacrament, and washing—vivified by the power of the atonement of Jesus Christ, and administered by the authority of the priesthood—which over time bond (affix, glue, unite) the other elements generating the solidification process of the “slab” or eternal relationship.
- Rebar would represent the support structure provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to couples and families, shaping the institution of marriage and family in divinely approved forms revealed to living prophets.



All blessings, honors, and privileges of the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage that will come to be enjoyed in spheres of eternal glory will be installed atop this “slab” established here in mortality in the House of the Lord, and solidified in our temporarily imperfect homes.

Applying this analogy to civil marriage, or marriage for time only, I would say the following:

Civil marriage is an institution defined and sanctioned by the power of the state or civil government. Using the analogy described above, this “slab” has neither cement nor water, and the aggregates and steel are supported by wooden molds, or civil laws enforced in society. These molds can have the most varied formats, depending on the laws approved by congresses, parliaments, or mortal monarchs. However, precisely because they are established by mortal powers, with the occurrence of death the wooden molds disintegrate, and the “slab” crumbles.

Fortunately, sacred ordinances performed in temples can add “concrete and water”—that is, priesthood and the power of the atonement of Jesus Christ—to these civilly-established relationships and, if confirmed by all parties involved, these relationships can then last forever.

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